

**Remarks**

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in view of the above amendments and in light of the following remarks and discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 6, and 12 are currently pending in the application; Claims 1-4 and 6 having been amended, Claims 5 and 7-11 having been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and new Claim 12 having been added, by way of the present response. Applicants respectfully assert that support for the changes to the claims is self-evident from the originally filed disclosure, including the original claims, and that therefore no new matter has been added.

In the outstanding Office Action Claims 1, 2, and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,796,905 to Hoffart; Claims 3-5 and 7-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hoffart in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,278,828 to Stocklein et al.; Claims 1, 7, and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,485,539 to Mills in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,416,875 to Keplinger et al. (Keplinger); and Claims 2, 9, and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mills in view of Keplinger and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,292,613 to Fort. Applicants respectfully assert that the amendments to the claims have overcome the rejections for the following reasons.

The present invention is directed to a distinctive optical fiber. Independent Claim 1 recites a colored layer coated over an optical fiber core. A plurality of distinctive layers, which include ink, is disposed intermittently in a longitudinal direction of the optical fiber core between the optical fiber core and the colored layer. A ratio of a total length of the distinctive layers to a length of the distinctive optical fiber is less than or equal to 1:5.

Inasmuch as independent Claim 1 has been amended to recite features of original dependent Claim 5, which is currently canceled, Applicants respectfully assert that the

rejection of independent Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) in view of Hoffart, as well as the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) in view of Mills and Keplinger, have been overcome.

With respect to the rejection of original dependent Claim 5, which is relevant to independent Claim 1, the Office Action relies solely on Hoffart to teach or suggest the claimed features recited in the claim. Applicants respectfully assert that Hoffart does not teach or suggest the claimed features, however, for the following reasons.

Hoffart is directed to an optical fiber with a color marking. As shown in Figure 2, for example, of Hoffart, a color marking in the form of spaced colored rings 3 is placed on a coating 2 composed of one or more plastic coatings to protect a fiber 1. The material of the colored rings 3 is an IR- or UV-curable resin.<sup>1</sup>

Applicants respectfully assert that Hoffart does not teach or suggest, however, the claimed features of a ratio of a total length of layers of ink to a length of an optical fiber is less than or equal to 1:5, as recited in independent Claim 1. Rather, Applicants respectfully assert that Hoffart states that the colored rings 3 include a curable resin, rather than ink.

Applicants respectfully assert that the claimed features recited in independent Claim 1 can provide numerous advantages. By way of specific non-limiting examples, Applicants respectfully assert that the claimed ratio of a total length of layers of ink to a length of an optical fiber can provide a clearly distinctive layer, while providing a low transmission loss. Applicants respectfully assert that a ratio higher than 1:5 can result in undesirable transmission losses.<sup>2</sup>

Specifically, independent Claim 1 recites “a plurality of distinctive layers, which comprise ink, disposed intermittently in a longitudinal direction of the optical fiber core between the optical fiber core and the colored layer, wherein a ratio of a total length of the

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<sup>1</sup> Column 3, lines 28-33.

<sup>2</sup> Applicants' original Figure 9, as well as from page 17, line 18 to page 18, line 9, of Applicants' originally filed specification.

distinctive layers to a length of the distinctive optical fiber is less than or equal to 1:5." Thus, Applicants respectfully request the allowance of independent Claim 1.

Applicants respectfully assert that Claims 2-4 and 6 are allowable for the same reasons as independent Claim 1 from which they depend, as well as for their own features. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of dependent Claims 2-4 and 6 under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a) be withdrawn, and the allowance of dependent Claims 2-4 and 6.

Applicants respectfully assert that new independent Claim 12 is allowable for reasons similar to those of independent Claim 1. Thus, Applicants respectfully request the allowance of new independent Claim 12.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal Allowance. A Notice of Allowance for Claims 1-4, 6, and 12 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

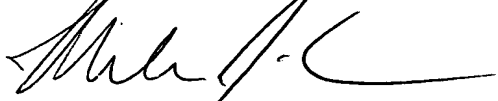
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Respectfully submitted,

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